

Comments on the proposed precedence of the specific name of *Euphryne obesus* Baird, 1858 over that of *Sauromalus ater* Duméril, 1856 (Reptilia, Squamata)
(Case 3143; see BZN 58: 37–40, 229)

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I unconditionally support the application of Montanucci et al. to give precedence to the commonly used specific name of the iguanid lizard *Sauromalus obesus* (Baird, 1858) over the seldom-used name *S. ater* Duméril, 1856. The preponderance of use of the name *S. obesus* in the scientific and popular literature (ca. 550 titles for *S. obesus*, versus 46 titles for *S. ater* of which only 12 are post-1950) gives overwhelming and convincing justification for conservation of *S. obesus*. Failure to do so would result in widespread instability and confusion.

I would like to comment further on another use of the name *S. obesus* not covered by the applicants, namely its use in teaching. The species is widely known for its unusual escape behavior. When disturbed or frightened, an individual retreats into the nearest crevice and wedges itself in place by gulping air and inflating its body. Thus, the animal becomes quite difficult to extract. It shares this remarkable behavioral trait with the pancake tortoise *Malacochersus tornieri* (which has a flexible shell) of East Africa. I have described this unusual behavior (always using the name *S. obesus*) in my courses for 34 years. Thus, thousands of students have learned the name. I suspect that students elsewhere have likewise frequently used the name *S. obesus* in conjunction with its unusual escape behavior.

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I support the arguments of Montanucci et al. to conserve the long used and well known specific name of *Sauromalus obesus* (Baird, 1858) for the famous chuckwalla of the deserts of the United States and Mexico.

I have used the name *Sauromalus obesus* in over a dozen papers on thermoregulation, paleontology, archaeology, social behavior, conservation and indeed folklore. This name is associated with the chuckwalla in many different fields. In addition, the name has been used in such popular magazines as *Arizona Highways* and *National Geographic*. Many books and leaflets sold in national parks, museums and zoos in the southwestern United States have photographs or stories about the chuckwalla and use the name *S. obesus*.

Since the name is so well established in the scientific and lay literature it is my view that *Sauromalus obesus* should be conserved by giving it precedence over *S. ater* Duméril, 1856.

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